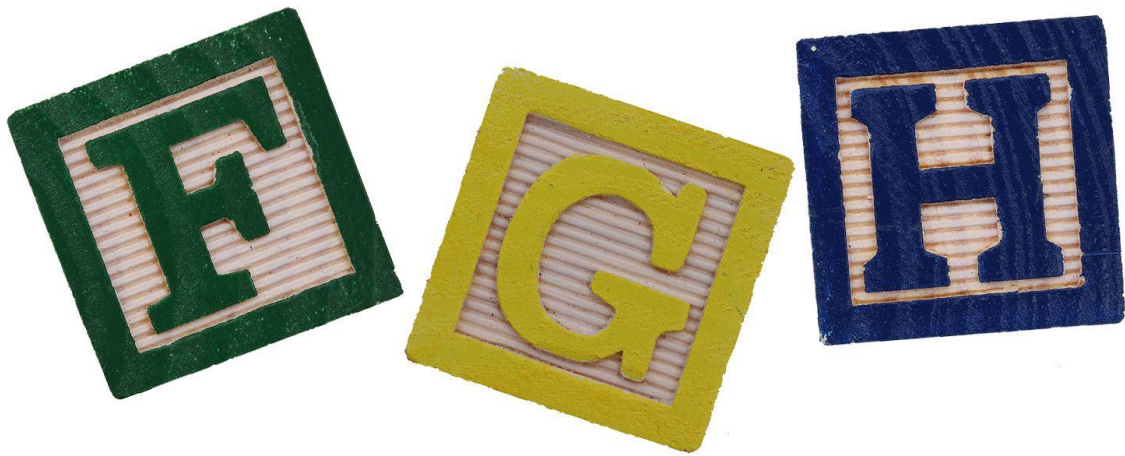


# Interview with God

Version 1.1



## Introduction

***Interview with God*** was written by a married, middle aged father of three children, during his first two years of recovery from alcoholism. Challenged by the effort to change his life, and dogged by relentless anxiety, conflict, periods of unemployment and financial uncertainty, the author was encouraged by peers in recovery to seek peace and acceptance through faith in a benevolent God.

The author was desperate to try anything, but faced immediately the stark realization that his prior contemplations on God had been limited largely to undermining others' beliefs in things with which he disagreed. All too little had been done to arrive at a personal vision of what God *was*, rather than merely what God was not. He realized he did not know what he truly believed at all, at a time when he most needed to believe in something.

Desperate for inspiration, but mistrustful of organized religion, the author decided to seek directly from God answers to questions preventing his faith. Over the course of two painful and exhausting years of soul searching and contemplation, ideas and imagery gradually appeared and evolved until, in the end, the author chronicled his results by plunking God as a guest into a TV studio chair and, through alter-ego television interviewer Ben Dixon, presented Him with Big Questions facing all of us.

The process resulted in a profound sense of sustaining faith for the author, presented in an entertaining and accessible written product that proposes an intriguing foundation for relating to God. ***Interview with God*** was first experienced as a gift to the author's wife and children, and some friends and peers in addictive recovery. In a few years since the work was posted on Archive.org, ***Interview with God*** has been downloaded and shared by thousands of people interested in exploring fresh ideas for spiritual inspiration, or wishing to reflect on life's meaning in general.

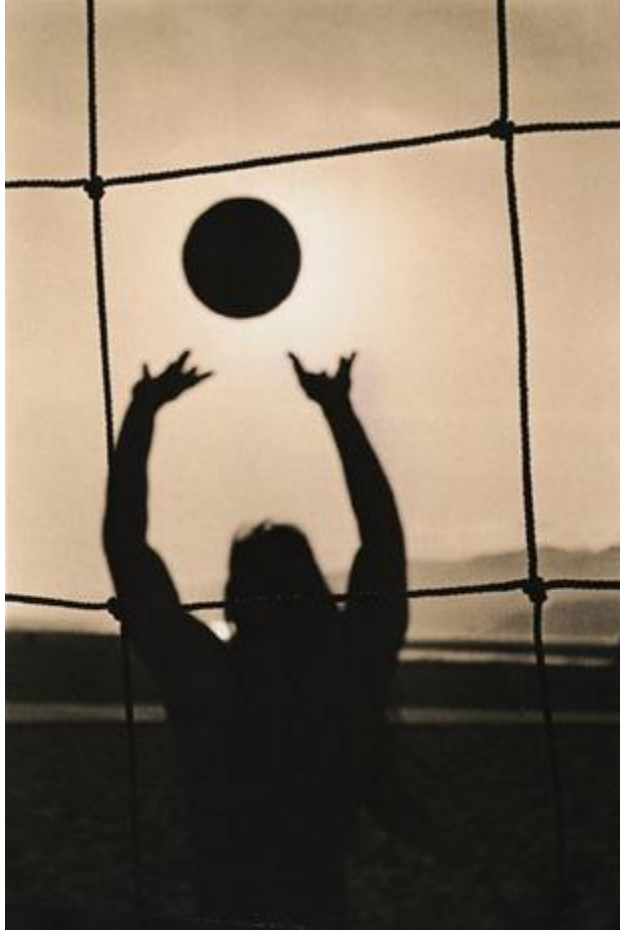
This online work was updated (to 'V.1.1', as indicated in the page footers) in December, 2014, in an effort to eliminate some typos and clean up areas here and there – however the piece remains otherwise faithful to the original edition. No doubt new errors and typos can also be found in this latest version, and where this occurs your patience is gratefully appreciated.

***Interview with God*** is offered humbly by its author to anyone interested, in hopes it will stimulate healthy, open sharing of ideas with one another on the subject of God; may we all in doing so move closer to a peaceful acceptance of ourselves, each other, and the roles that lay before us in this lifetime.

Thank you for reading ***Interview with God***. Your thoughts and ideas are welcome, and may be sent directly to the author via 'Ben Dixon's' e-mail address, found at the bottom of most pages.\*

\*(PLEASE NOTE – The 'Ben Dixon' character in ***Interview with God*** is completely fictitious, and as such any resemblance or similarity in name or attributed dialogue to any living person or persons is entirely coincidental.)

# Interview with God Part 1: Volleyball



*SCENE: Live television studio set. Simply decorated for long-form interviews; two simple chairs facing one another across a coffee table decorated with a small vase of fresh flowers. Water pitcher and glasses. One chair is occupied, the host making some last moment shirt cuff and personal comfort adjustments as countdown to air begins. Turns and smiles, offers a quick thumbs-up to the empty chair. Five, four three... Lights brighten. Go to air...*

**Interviewer With God (IWG):** Hi and welcome. I'm Ben Dixon and we're here today bringing you an exclusive interview with God, sitting across from me here. Good morning, God, and welcome to the show.

**God:** Thank you. I'm pleased to be here. Pleased to be everywhere, actually...

*(Audience laughter, scattered applause)*

**IWG:** Yes of course, that's right isn't it? *(Chuckles)* I suppose then in that sense, you are actually here for all of our shows!

**God:** In a manner of speaking, yes.

**IWG:** (*Gazing intently*) If I may say so it is startling how you look just like I imagined you. An awful lot like Jesus, actually. Or at least like his image in the pictures we had around the house when I was growing up. Except you're maybe darker in complexion.

**God:** You know I get that all the time?

**IWG:** The darker thing?

**God:** No, the looking just like people imagined part. There's a simple reason for that though. You see, I am not really physically before you in this chair. Everybody sees me differently, because nobody can truly *see* me at all. Images of me are generally projected through a thick lens of imagination, then passed down through families and cultures and tinkered with a little here and there. Funny story: There are Hindu people who manifest me as a deity with a whole bunch of arms, and that image is intended to convey a sense of omnipotence, which is suitable, I suppose, except that I actually tend to fidget, and man that's a lot of hands to keep occupied...

**IWG:** (*Laughs*) That's a great anecdote. But I really do wonder, why would you appear darker to me than I expected?

**God:** Well, you were raised as a Christian, so there's the Jesus thing right there. And you know intellectually that Jesus was from the Middle East, and that people from there are darker skinned than yourself. You obviously have a good mind for keeping together the little details.

**IWG:** (*Absorbed and staring*) Uncanny. You look exactly like a framed print we had in our den.

**God:** (*Smiling*) If you'd like, you can get up and move around the set, and my eyes will seem to follow you wherever you go. It's real eerie.

**IWG:** That's pretty funny... So you're already answering one of the big questions right there: Whether or not God has a sense of humour...

**God:** I created the French, didn't I? (*Chuckles to himself*) Just kidding. Great people, the French. (*Smattering of applause from the audience.*) Oh! Bienvenue, mes enfants! Love the French! How could you *not* love them? So gung ho about the stuff they come up with. But yes, I am routinely accused of inserting the odd bit of humour in my work. Okay, sometimes *really* odd, but hey, it makes me laugh. And if people can manage to hang in there long enough, they will usually see the humour too, eventually.

**IWG:** When you say as you just did there that you've been 'accused' of having a sense of humour, I want to ask, accused by whom? Who do you refer to speaking about God in such a familiar way?

**God:** Just about everybody does. You included. Confessions, accusations, pleas... I hear all of the petitions, you know. Whether you're quietly regretting your latest sins, or you're out on the street, ruminating darkly and profane over a flattened tire. Or when you're in danger and desperate for help. Or in hospital praying for the life and health of one you love. Yeah, I hear it

all quite clearly. And it's not just me who listens, it's *everything*. Prayers of every kind, whether spontaneous and unfocused, or thoughtful and meditative, are transmissions of energy into the surrounding world. Prayers intended for me make a distinct sound, you could say, amid the background noise of random thoughts, petty complaints and daydreams. And every prayer has an effect on the collective experience, the same way every little gust of wind combines in the sum of the weather. Prayer puts things in motion. Prayer influences things already in motion. It all counts to some degree. It all makes a difference.

**IWG:** That's reassuring for those inclined to pray, God, and will certainly be welcome words to those already faithful. But you must be well aware of the inconsistency of faith among people. There are those who are not only unrepresented in prayer, but who even deny that you exist at all. And they do so sometimes with an aggressiveness that approaches hostility. They write books, and appear on shows like this to support and communicate their positions of disbelief. Are you disappointed, or angry with such people, who insist that the only rational and practical approach to life is one in which faith in God is denied, or at least deferred for lack of better evidence?

**God:** Disappointed? No, not at all. Sympathetic, perhaps. I watch some of those people and find myself wincing now and then as I think, 'Man. That's gotta hurt, banging your head defiantly against the world like that. Because it's a hard world – I mean, I made it myself, and I made it pretty durable, so I *know*. I watch them and wonder to myself, 'How long can you keep that up? How long do you *think* you can keep that up? Why are you so resistant to dropping their shoulders a little and having faith that you are part of something bigger and that it's all okay? You are not alone and you don't have to try to orchestrate everything.'

You see, the faithless think they have to steer life itself, instead of just themselves through it. They get these bright ideas about how to set up life to make *it* work for *them*. (*Leans forward slightly in chair*) And that's the flaw, *right there*, see? '*Making it work*.' You don't make it work. It works all by itself. There is no need to push. You try to *make* it work, and you're going to wreck it. You may get a little win here and there, then you think you're master of your own destiny and you start flexing, becoming more and more audacious about who you think you are, and what you think you deserve; what you think you can accomplish. You seek to control rather than find ways to fit by which you can simply be at peace, living and working in grateful service of one another.

You know, a millennia or so ago I watched this guy with this horse that he claimed to all who would listen was the strongest in the world. I have to admit, that was actually one pretty big beast. Really sweet nature though. Anyway, over and over he went around proving this poor creature's enormous power, defeating all other fine specimens in contests pulling these big carts filled with heavier and heavier loads of boulders. Over time the horse's owner did manage to convince everyone that his *was* indeed the strongest horse around; and okay they admitted, possibly strongest in the whole world. But in time this led everyone, including the horse's keeper, to the inevitable question: Well then, exactly *how* strong *is* the strongest horse in the world?

Reasonable question, right? And everyone wanted to know. So the guy proceeds to fill cart after cart with boulders way up to the top, and as his horse easily pulls away one he hitches the next cart to it, and then the next and so on.

**IWG:** Okay so what happened?

**God:** Well the horse eventually keeled over and died, naturally. It was painful to watch, but inevitable. That's the tragic thing about all this. When you think you can take on life instead of just moving with it, the only way to find out for sure is push life till *you* eventually break. Then you can say with complete certainty, 'Okay, It seems I can take right up to a little less than that point of collapse.' But the test has destroyed the subject. You have become damaged, so the pursuit was ultimately wasteful and hurtful. And this happens with practically everyone who won't permit themselves release into faith.

**IWG:** But does it end there? Isn't that the point when the broken are supposed to have their epiphany, like they do in books and movies?

**God:** You know, you'd think so. But instead more often than not when people *do* break, they hole themselves up inside the confusion of their lives, wounded and scared, not trusting anyone or anything. And that can be a pretty tough place from which to see the beauty and symmetry of life, to experience the sort of revelations that might cross one over toward faith. Faith and its brother, Acceptance, you see, are the keys to it all. They are the means to freedom from a pointless struggle with Life.

*(Turns and looks toward the camera)* And you know, I want to make it clear to everybody right here and now, that I *do* want you to be happy. There, I've said it out loud to you, so there is no misunderstanding! God *wants* you to be *happy*! I really do. And while I can't arrange it all the time, I do try to help out where I can, when I can. But you have to remember, there are a lot of lives in play out there – a lot of dynamics at work at one time, so specific things are often resolved over a longer period of time than you might like, or in a manner you didn't expect. But everything *does* get looked after, I assure you. Sometimes I can only provide a little, you know, a small nudge here and there to let you know I'm still around and I'm rooting for you. Like little chocolates on your pillow to remind you that I love you. And once in a while I get to unveil a genuinely big surprise. Something truly meaningful to you, like maybe a great opportunity to make positive change in your life, or some other kind of good fortune now and then.

But the whole point is that, at the very end when you ask yourself, 'Did I enjoy my life, overall?', the point is that you might say 'yes'. I really hope you will say yes. I have arranged things so that you can say yes... But it's up to you to work with me, to help me provide you with that full and meaningful life you want and that can be yours to enjoy.

**IWG:** If things have really been arranged for us to live happy lives, then what holds so many people back? Why aren't more people jumping on board, solely on the evidence of success had by others who live in faith? Why is there so much resistance leading to loneliness, anger and disquiet?

**God:** There is a sad and vicious cycle at work in the minds of many people who find themselves unable, or unwilling, to achieve faith. They keep pointing at what they call imperfections of the world as though it were evidence against taking faith. But actually, the world *is* perfect. The world is quite nice, really, and sustains all within it very well, despite their best efforts to thwart it; but that's another topic altogether.

My point is that it is not the world but the *people* who are imperfect. So they look around at the mess others just like themselves have created – the cruelty and the selfishness and the exploitation, and I can actually see why it's a struggle for them to achieve or hold on to faith that everything will be okay. Fear creeps in through the tiniest cracks and pushes them wider, and faith drains out. Without faith that all is right with the world, people panic and revert to wits and willpower, acting out on the premise that no fortune will come to them if they don't seize it for themselves – even forcibly, at the expense of others.

And so their actions, along with that of others similarly afflicted, contribute to a bleak landscape of selfishness, evil and pain. So you see it is the *faithless themselves* who are the source of the very degradation they hold up as evidence of an unjust world. They are the authors of their own disillusionment, and they point to the pervasiveness of corruption as justification for similar misdeeds by themselves, and in doing so become trapped in a self-fulfilling cycle of darkness and fear.

By the way this is something the Buddhists have been going on about for thousands of years, you know, that fear is at the root of all disquiet. I am glad to be here today to tell you that the flip side of fear and disquiet is faith and serenity. Not capital 'F' faith, waiting there for you packaged in some particular religion or angle on spiritual discipline. Rather, I am speaking of just a simple faith that everything is going to be okay – the way it always has been, and it always will be. I really mean it when I say this: 'It is all going to work out the way it is supposed to.' On the most grand and the most granular levels. I mean, anyone personally just has to look back a year or two, and they can see that events or circumstances that frightened and confused them back then have worked out in some way since. You look back further, even more so. Try to remember that. Try to have faith.

**IWG:** But that's a big hurdle right there, isn't it? Being able to relax enough to *have* faith in the first place. It is almost as though you first *need* faith, to *get* faith!

**God:** That's a common and mistaken way to look at it. It implies you need tangible proof first, which is of course antithetical to 'faith' by definition. There is a big difference between 'having faith' and 'being convinced' – so we're off to a bad start. Let's try this: I have a little way for you to approach this, to see if it helps. I call it, 'Try before you buy.'

**IWG:** Okay, I'm in. How does that work?

**God:** Well, it's just like it sounds. Just try it out for a while. Simply decide you are going to 'test drive' faith, then let the world unfold as it will, and don't mess around with it too much. Try accepting difficult people as they are, and don't try to change them. Change your reaction to them instead. Don't go dashing after every impulse, but instead stay focused on developing your own

character and when genuinely good opportunities come along for you – and they will all by themselves – hey, great. Otherwise just enjoy yourself. Learn to wait and watch. You will see that things will just work out one way or another. It's that easy. That is living in faith. Trusting in faith itself is how faith is achieved. Try before you buy, see...?

**IWG:** Okay so that's how to get started. But once we begin to gather faith, we won't want to stop there. We will of course want to further develop our relationship with God, to bolster that faith even further. How do we proceed from there?

**God:** Well, you should just devote yourselves to the pursuit of a Right Life, if you are not already doing so.

**IWG:** And how does one do that?

**God:** *(Pauses a moment, looking at Ben thoughtfully)* You know, there is this marvellous game I see played on the beach sometimes, called volleyball. I really like this game. This game is actually a wonderful metaphor for living a Right Life. Now hear me out on this, it makes sense once I explain and you think about it.

In this game you start by first accepting yourself as being a part of a larger group, all of whom need each other and have to work together. You each get your own little spot in the sand, and you are expected to respect each other's space. Then you have to tone down your personal willpower: You can't just go charging around, bumping into everybody. You have to wait for your turns, which may happen lots, or maybe only once in a while, or may not happen much for you at all. It doesn't matter – don't take it personally. And when it's not your turn, that's fine. You can relax and enjoy the sun, the sand, and the bathing suits.

But when your turn does come and it's time to do your bit, even that's limited: You can't catch and hold the volleyball, you can only bump its path, sometimes over the net all by yourself, sometimes setting up someone else to do that. As a matter of fact, the communal play of volleyball is a lot like what we discussed about prayer when you think about it – the trajectory of the ball becomes the sum of influences placed on it by the different players.

Then every few minutes, everybody shifts over a position and gets a fresh perspective. They get to see the world anew from the last player's viewpoint. Great game, that volleyball.

**IWG:** Oops I'm sorry we have to pause here for a moment for a short break, but we'll be back after a word from our sponsor. Will you stick around, God, and talk to us some more when we come back?

**God:** Certainly. Time is something I do have.

**IWG:** Great, then everyone please stay put and come back with us in just a few minutes to hear more from our very special guest today, God.

*SCENE: Lights lower on stage, come up on audience in applause. Switch to break.*



## Interview with God Part 2: A Place at the Lake



*Camera returns from commercial with a wide shot from the rear of the studio, panning the backs of enthusiastically applauding audience facing the brightly lit stage. The shot zooms in to the host fiddling with a pen in his hand while he balances some pages of notes on his lap. He smiles a tight, fixed grin toward the audience as the camera shot widens to frame the entire set. The music fades quickly and the audience quiets in anticipation, ready for the show to resume.*

**IWG:** *(Turns to smile and acknowledge his guest)* Hello and welcome back, God. I simply have to tell you again how thrilling it is to have you here as our guest today.

**God:** Thanks very much. It's really great to be talking to you, and to see everyone here in the audience. *(Enthusiastic applause, God pauses and smiles at the warm reception before turning back to the host)* And I have to comment, Ben, that I really like what I did with your hair there today. Looks good, I think.

**IWG:** Thanks. I was quite pleased too. Yesterday it looked as though I was being punished for something. Anyway let's not waste time on my appearance, it's a wonderful honour to be talking to you! ...And a treat to know for certain this time that when I speak, I have God's attention!

**God:** I am always listening, Ben. Always paying attention.

**IWG:** Oh yes I just remembered, on the subject of listening, I want to assure our viewers at home that as always we're watching your e-mails and posts to our web site during the show, and we're going to select one or two questions or comments for a response direct from God. Okay? Great. In fact, why don't we take a peek at one of those now, what do you think?

**God:** Hey you know me. I'm game for anything.

**IWG:** Okay. Let's see... Here's one just sent in to us from, uh, '*nevadacleric21*' who asks:

*"Which is the true religion we should take as our faith?"*

That's a good question, 'Nevada'. So what would you tell him, God? Something Muslim? Judaic? Christian? Hindu?... Which religion best represents you, as you would have it?"

**God:** It actually doesn't matter.

**IWG:** (*Looks startled*) ...It doesn't matter? But the affiliation of people with religious faiths have been a fundamental concern within societies, and also between them, for thousands of years!

**God:** Well, I'm sorry if that disappoints anyone, but it really doesn't make any difference to me what name you give your faith. In fact, I've been given lots of reasons to be put off by religious 'branding', so you're not going to find me picking one over the other. The insistence by some that other people enter into an alliance with them around their personal relationships with me has led to a lot of conflict and cruelties. It's torn otherwise loving families and peaceful communities apart. I mean seriously, does anybody really think I might approve of that? And this is not even to consider the tragedy of those empty souls turned off from achieving any faith at all because of such hypocrisy. And who can blame them, when they see that nonsense?

**IWG:** Are you saying, then, that we are better off *not* to take a religious faith as our own?

**God:** I'm saying that whatever you choose to believe, if it helps you achieve faith and acceptance in the course of all things, then that is a wonderful thing. But do not stake off your faith like it's some kind of exclusive territory that only you and I share, the borders from which to condemn the different beliefs of others. I truly don't get that. Why on Earth would you want to attack the faith of others? Is it not wonderful that they believe in something at all greater than themselves?

You know we touched on an important point related to this earlier, the fact that nobody can really see me. No person can fully understand me from the vantage point of mortal life – humans simply don't have the information required, or even the capacity to process it. Yet in spite of all this, people manage to connect to me from something they find inside themselves all the same. They sense *something*, and over time they construct an accessible way to experience it that becomes their own 'religion'. It becomes their technique to be with me, and as long as it works for just one person it is as sacred as any other avenue of faith. So make no mistake, it offends me to watch some people use their personal choice of beliefs to draw lines in the sand between

themselves and others, to be intolerant of other's ideas about what shape I take, or to proclaim about whom or what I might approve.

**IWG:** But if people believe all sorts of different and contradictory things about you, then many of those beliefs *have* to be mistaken...

**God:** Not so much mistaken really, as misrepresented. You want to know the truth? Every time somebody finds faith through a compelling idea of what I might be, I become a bit of that. You have to remember, I am the Universe. I am All. I am comprised of everyone and everything. So I am every idea, too. It's pointless to try to wrangle agreement about what I am, since I am in fact *everything*, and like everything, I am always evolving!

So let me assure you right here and now that there won't be some cosmic timer going off one day, when everyone has to put down their scriptures and look up to see who was the real God after all. Although that would be kind of funny, to see the looks on everyone's faces. ...Okay maybe that's just me.

**IWG:** So you are saying then that *every* faith is actually correct? Even though they may seem incompatible with one another?

**God:** I'm saying that whatever means you choose to achieve a true sense of faith is correct. And I am saying that whatever does not produce faith for you is incorrect. You must have access to your own choices. You must not feel bound to a path that doesn't work for you just because others have chosen to take it for themselves. If it doesn't work for you, try something else. It's the destination we are after, not matching each other's footsteps to get there.

**IWG:** Since you have found some elements of organized faith divisive – perhaps even arrogant – can we take away that you actually *don't like* religion?

**God:** Well, my relationship with organized faith is much more complicated than that. It's not all bad – few things ever are. I just have some of pet peeves about how people use religion against each other. On the other hand, a lot of very good things take place that would never happen were it not for the positive aspects of religion. Don't get me wrong: The organized religious life can be entirely compatible with very good faith and a Right Life lived well, just like any other effective system of faith. My point is just that no particular religion is the essential way for one to have faith. As I said earlier, all that's necessary for faith is simply ...faith. However you manage to get it.

**IWG:** That's very interesting, and I think maybe quite timely for me to hear from you right now too, because lately I've begun to sense a worldwide groundswell of renewed interest in spirituality. People everywhere are questioning old beliefs that never really served them, or that were somehow incompatible with their deeper instincts. It's like a gut level awakening is taking place. Everywhere around the globe, people seem to be sensing that something is missing, that they should be looking for something *more*...

**God:** Well it's funny you word it that way, because people should actually be looking for *less*, in a manner of speaking. It is a revealing phenomenon that you are more likely to find people satisfied with the strength of their relationship to me among the struggling or the destitute, than among those blessed far more bountifully. There are of course always exceptions, but look around for yourself. It is a prevailing condition of man that he is limited in what he can appreciate. You give him too much too consistently, and he's inclined to lose sight of what he has altogether.

In every person there is a tipping point of grace, a level of good fortune at which he or she begins to only compare themselves upward against those who have even more, rather than downward in relation to those less fortunate. They dig themselves into ruts of fear and desire. Over and over you will find extravagantly blessed people turning their own good fortune against themselves – ruining themselves with unhealthy excess, or compulsively chasing after endless hollow victories in the arenas of their imaginations. It's very telling that only from the rubble of ruined lives can many souls find the contentment that has always eluded them, discovering at last those simple, common things for which everyone can be genuinely thankful.

**IWG:** That is tragic, and I think each of us knows someone, perhaps even ourselves, who've been caught at some time in a self-destructive struggle for lack of meaning. Let's have a look at another message from one of our viewers. Here's a question from 'millionman' in Washington, DC:

*"My faith is challenged by doubts about there really being an afterlife to reward us for how we live our lives on Earth. Living a morally correct life requires a lot of sacrifice and discipline. But I am plagued by nagging suspicions that we may be kidding ourselves that there is anything beyond this mortal life. Maybe we just dissipate into nothing when we die, and if so we will have endured futile self-denial at the same time that others enjoyed the chance to indulge in unrestrained and self-centred pleasures here on Earth. Can you tell us, are the sacrifices we are compelled to make in the name of living a Right Life really worthwhile?"*

**God:** Well, I hear our friend 'millionman' asking about a couple of things there, Ben. First of all, he seems to be discounting the very real personal benefits of building moral character in and of itself. Developing integrity is not so much a sacrifice as it is an *investment* in one's self. By making such progress you are paving the way to better living; you are not denying yourself something better you might otherwise have gained by living selfishly. Integrity provides a solid footing from which to make confident and sound decisions amid the uncertainty of an ethically tangled world. Who doesn't want to live always knowing what the next right thing to do is, and then to feel good about doing it?

The other thing I'm hearing from your viewer is that he's letting moments of doubt and discouragement take his eyes off the positive effect his own efforts have on the world he inhabits. Improving yourself improves those around you... Have you ever engaged in a sport with somebody better than yourself? You may come away feeling a little humbled, but in the process you also get better at the game, and so the experience moves you forward. The same is true of demonstrating prudent restraint and good moral character in your daily life. Other people are always watching each other for cues on how to live. You can bring up the game of others

around you, and inspire them to work on themselves. So the more people of principal and character there are in the world, the more inspired others will be to become the same, and thus the world gets better for everyone. And everyone wants a better world...

**IWG:** So would you say then that the 'game' is really improving on Earth right now? Do you actually see this happening?

**God:** Well you know, Ben, your comment about the groundswell in spirituality was actually very perceptive. You are right: Something *is* happening these days, and it's one of the reasons I accepted the invitation to take part in this interview. The time is approaching for a leap forward. The pieces are coming into place that will allow this to happen on a massive scale.

With technical advances and ubiquitous networks and the unparalleled reach of individuals, connections are being made that were impossible only a few years ago. Global discussions and exchanges of thought are taking place. Mankind is on the verge of a critical mass; it has the chance to achieve a higher level of consciousness. The transition will be chaotic, and this has already started: It's getting a little nuts out there, and I don't think I need to point out examples of this – I'm sure you can think of plenty. But human spiritual progress is about to pick up speed, and the results in the end are going to be worth the bumps and grinds that will characterize the transition. Life in this world will become a much better experience for everyone passing through.

And that brings me to the one other thing '*millionman*' touched on in his message today. There is, and there always has been, a lot of uncertainty about what form an 'afterlife' might take beyond the mortal one. I have to tell you it's fascinating for me to observe what people come up with when they speculate about what happens beyond this world.

**IWG:** Well can you then put our doubts and misconceptions aside by telling us if there *is* in fact a 'hereafter'? Are there really Heavenly rewards to look forward to beyond a life well lived?

**God:** Okay, first let's stop right there for a second and take a little look at this whole 'Heaven' thing. "Heaven", as I usually hear it described, sounds an awful lot like a permanent, all-inclusive vacation. As though I run an eternal timeshare or something. It's humorous, if maybe a little pathetic, the way people will work so hard all their lives, not so much for the good of accomplishment for its own sake, but rather on the prospect that this 'Heaven' place waits on the other end as a final solution to Monday mornings.

**IWG:** (*Chuckling*) I guess that's not so impressive of us is it? "If I should die before I wake, please take me where I can slack off forever."

**God:** Exactly. I mean, would you put that on a resume? Under 'Career Objective'? "Will work like a slave through life in return for eternal sloth?" ...Although I do have to admit, there is an impressive level of optimism underlying that whole concept, even if it is misguided.

**IWG:** But, getting back to ‘millionman’s’ question, the inevitability of death and the utter lack of any clues about what lies beyond really does frighten people considerably. I don’t think anxieties about an unknown date with eternal darkness should be surprising...

**God:** You think it’s going to be dark? What kind of God would I be if I didn’t leave The Light on for you when you come home? ...Let’s try something here. Close your eyes Ben, and tell me what you see.

**IWG:** Okay. (*Closes eyes, quiet for a long moment.*) I see ...light. It’s a beautiful, white light. Wow. Is that the same light you hear people describe after near-death experiences?

**God:** Yes, that’s the one.

**IWG:** It’s so, so ...warm, and compelling. ...Hey wait does this mean I’m *dying*?

**God:** (*Chuckling with the audience*) Not yet, Ben, no. Just close your eyes again and relax. Tell me more about the light.

**IWG:** It’s like fluid. Swirling and luminescent. It’s like water. I think it actually is water. At least that’s the way I’m seeing it. What is it I’m looking at?

**God:** That’s home, Ben. That’s you, as a matter of fact. And that’s me. That’s all of us. And everything. That’s a family portrait.

**IWG:** I don’t understand...

**God:** The essence of life that animates you, the energy that engages your soul to your body and which brought about your life on Earth, is like a drop borrowed from the vast lake of Creation. It is from this lake that all life springs; the unifying source through which all consciousness is connected. The lake is also the destination to which your spirit will return when your life is complete.

**IWG:** (*Speaking excitedly*) So then do we come back again after that? Are there more lives after this one, and have we been here before? I mean, is there really such a thing as reincarnation?

**God:** This life you have right now, your stream of consciousness flowing by throughout your days, is very special, it is very unique. You may have heard it said that ‘one can never look at the same river twice’, and the same applies to the course of a person’s life. Your lives are always changing, from beginning to end. And as your lives take their course, they have an effect on their surroundings. They carve the landscape, as it were, of my Creation. You shape the world on my behalf. This is what I mean when I say you are of me, and I am in you, because you are put in this life to help advance my will. I work through the work you do simply by living your life.

**IWG:** But is this the most efficient way to get things done, God? I mean, ‘life is short’ as they say, plus most of us don’t have a clue what we’re supposed to be doing... I don’t know how

much 'landscaping' we actually manage to accomplish for you in the average lifetime. Not much seems to change from generation to generation...

**God:** Then let's talk about geology for a moment to get some perspective. It's a fact that rivers criss-crossing the land have beginnings and ends too. Changes to climate, and weather patterns, and even whole continents drifting slowly together and apart alter conditions dramatically over millennia. But of course such events – stretched out over vast time frames – are not visible within the short life of a human being; or even within scores of lives across generations.

But regardless of whether it is visible to you, rivers do come and go. And each leaves behind the legacy of a changed world, shaped by the flow of their existence.

The same is true of rivers of life, sustained by the lake of Creation. The billions of lives that come and go over the course of time are like so many drops of rain that have risen from the lake, fallen across the land, and streamed back to me again, carving the landscape bit by bit in the course of doing so. Each drop – each individual life – by itself might not seem to make a big difference, but taken all together – well, a lot of work gets done on my behalf over time.

Which brings me back to your question about reincarnation: The short answer is yes, reincarnation does exist, but not in the way you think it does. When you die *you* do not return to this world. You return to your place as part of the lake. Part of me. You return to your origin as part of everyone and everything, all at once, the same as you were before you came here.

**IWG:** Well then if *we* don't come back, who *does* come here when a new child is born? Is every life a completely new creation?

**God:** Not entirely new. Imagine just for a moment that we switch to using a glass of water as the metaphor for a person's life, instead of that single drop. Now, let's say it is time for the end of your life. A tip of the wrist, and your water – your life – is poured out of the glass back into the vast reservoir from which all life comes. Meanwhile, countless other glasses are scooping and spilling life in and out of the lake at the same time all around. Then once your glass is emptied, it is ready to catch up a brand new life so it dips back in, and pulls up once more. Your glass is full again, right?

**IWG:** But it's not the same glass of water...

**God:** Exactly. And that's the same principle behind those 'drops' of life, we'll go back to calling them, rising from the lake and falling to animate all living things. Prior to this life, before this temporary incarnation that became you, you were a random potential within the body of the lake. You became that which you are because, well, that's just what happened at that moment. That's what scooped up. And it is the same with everybody and everything else. All are unique miracles from Creation, coming and going, ebbing and flowing, shaping the Universe on my behalf.

**IWG:** Hmm. That has profound implications for those of us who've been parted from loved ones through death, then.

**God:** Why do you say that?

**IWG:** Well, it means we'll never see each other again once we've lost them. They're gone forever. Diluted back into the lake.

**God:** You are looking at it backwards. When you say they are 'gone', they're gone from this life, sure. But during the time they *were* here in this life, they were 'gone' from the lake first and foremost. Gone from being within me, to a temporary place in a life out among the rest of Creation. You have to understand, your true place – your original *home*, as it were – is *with me* in the lake. Your life on Earth is actually a bit of travel – it's like a business trip, you might say.

**IWG:** A business trip?

**God:** Sure. Actually, a business trip is a very good analogy for earthly life when you think about it. You arrive here with the minimum necessary for existence, and you're going to go back with much the same. In the middle you just have to do your best and get done what you can. And on business trips things often don't go as planned or desired either, so you have to improvise. That's a lot like the way this life goes as you live it, wouldn't you say?

**IWG:** Yes, I suppose it is...

**God:** Anyway, let's get back to your point about lost loved ones. Here you are in this life – this business trip – after which you are going to come home, and be reunited with those loved ones more thoroughly and directly than you ever were on Earth. You will be assumed again back into me, just like those whose lives passed before yours were. So we will all be one again. And this happens over and over and always. Nobody is gone for all that long, and in the end everyone comes home again together within me.

**IWG:** But if it all leads back to you, and you are our point of origin, I have to wonder if the time spent out here in this life is really necessary. I mean, why are we cast out here in the first place, into what is at times a frightening and difficult existence, when our home place is safely and securely back in the lake with you? Why don't we just stay there and never leave? What's the point?

**God:** Ah. I assure you, your time spent in this life is hardly pointless. It is, in fact, essential to me, to you, to everything. Each life lived individually performs a small but vital role in the evolution of Creation. By the way, I roll my eyes when I hear people talk about Creation as if it was something over and done with a long time ago. In *six days*, according to one version, and 'On the seventh day God rested', as though I kicked back in a recliner after that just to watch and see what happens. ...Hey you see? There's that lazy thing again, just like with the concept of Heaven. I swear you guys are just fixated on the notion of slacking off, to the point of imagining *me* taking a day off because... well because I am *God*, I guess, so who's going to complain...

Anyway, my point is that I never actually rest. Creation has never stopped. It's still taking place, and it always will be. Creation is always moving, and each of you is a function of Creation,



moving within it. I need you out there – or out ‘here’, I guess I should say in light of where we are right now – to help me keep Creation moving.

**IWG:** In what *direction* is Creation moving?

**God:** Toward perfection, naturally. Which is itself a moving target in an evolving Universe, but that’s a whole other topic unto itself. ...Suffice just to say the heading of Creation is toward perfection.

**IWG:** Perfection? Forgive me for saying so, God, but looking around it seems to me like we are a long, long way from perfection.

**God:** I said we were headed 'toward' perfection. I never said we'd ever actually get there, or that we even could or would want to. Progress is all that’s important. It's as if you decided to travel North – you wouldn’t make plans to actually *arrive* at 'North', would you? Of course not. There is no *place* called North. And just like North, perfection is a heading, not a destination.

**IWG:** Well the rate we are making progress in the direction of perfection could be considered less than encouraging, from my humble viewpoint.

**God:** (*Leans to one side, smiling patiently*) Ben didn't we just talk about how whole continents drift and collide over eons and all that a couple of minutes ago? Remember my point about how time is relative, and what you said about a human life being so short and all that?

**IWG:** (*Smiles back meekly*) Okay, I can see where you’re going with this. I'll take your word for it, then, that things *are* getting better, though not at a pace so obvious to us in the space between our births and deaths.

**God:** Exactly. And I don’t deny that you may feel discouraged by what appear to be some confusing setbacks here and there, but these are no more than blips on an otherwise steady incline. Even at times when outrageous and terrible actions by misguided individuals can be so disheartening, you must never give up on the future and the value of persevering. My will *is* being done. Creation *always* flows toward what is good and right, despite the little back eddies here and there. There are also frequent leaps in mankind from which fresh springs of love and compassion emerge, but you just don’t hear so much about the good things as the bad. Bad news gets all the attention. Do not dwell on occasional spots of blight in an otherwise flourishing garden.

And Ben, I’d like to go back to your remark, asking why you had to be ‘cast out’ into your life, when you might instead have just remained in the lake, staying part of me. I want to go over your role again. You need to understand that your time here is both unique and important.

It’s people just like yourself, trying to live Right Lives, who bring about much of the progress in my continuing Creation. Your lives are the direct means I have to achieve this: I really *do* work through you. God is *of you*, you are of God. As you develop and take hold of your life with purpose, you are fulfilling your potential as an instrument of my will. You contribute to creating

the kind of world you want, that we *both* want. It is because of people's persistent contributions, toward what is good and right, that mankind makes progress in the direction of perfection.

You stand upon shoulders that stood upon shoulders that stood upon other shoulders that helped make the world a better and better place for those who came after. You may experience some very tough times, and you may feel very lonely out here in this incarnation now and then, but you are doing all this for a good reason. You *have* purpose. You are doing this for me. For everyone and all of us. ...Hey are you okay?

**IWG:** (*Eyes welling with tears*) ...I'm so sorry, pardon me. I'm just feeling a bit overcome. I've lived my whole life in this quiet, desperate need to know if the pain and frustrations and hard lessons I've endured have been all *somehow* worthwhile; especially some particularly hard periods of gnawing fear, and debilitating grief and loss. Times of such terrible darkness and doubt... I've always tried so hard to believe but I was never sure I wasn't just kidding myself. I've had to fight off the discouraging notion that the world might just be a random rock in a pointless Universe after all. ...So to hear you say these things now, I guess I'm just overcome with a profound sense of relief... I suppose that until now I haven't truly had faith. I've only been living on desperate hope...

**God:** (*Smiling softly*) I'm pleased to hear that our little talk is of such benefit to you, but you know, you really *did* know the truth the entire time.

**IWG:** I did?

**God:** Sure you did. You know that feeling you get sometimes, like you just seem to be missing something? That there has to be more to all of this? Well you aren't alone in having that feeling, and you've been absolutely right: Many people *are* missing something, and there *is* more to all this. And you've secretly suspected that maybe there was something wrong with you for being unsettled like that so much of the time, but in fact your instincts were serving you well. They have been alerting you even through the deafening noise of a material world that clamours for your participation in its diversion from the truth of what really matters.

You've been vaguely aware of a hole in your life that *things* can never fill. You've felt a need to know that there really is a noble reason for bearing the pain and difficulties of life, because all that was left otherwise was to feel lost and alone, ...away from the lake. And I understand that; I don't fault you at all for moments of doubt. But I do need you to go on, to live out your life on my behalf. I need all of you to do so, breaking trail where necessary and continuing in the direction of perfection.

**IWG:** But what about those who turn to the right path when their lives are nearly over and it's too late?

**God:** Too late for whom? It is never too late to change to the right direction. Every life is a journey, and every journey has its dead ends and its diversions. Like I said, this is just a business trip, and lots of stuff is going to happen that isn't productive. So it doesn't matter where you are

when you start or where you came from. All that ever matters is where you are headed. You just have to do what you can, when you can, to make progress down the road for all of us.

**IWG:** So what's down that road for us all eventually?

**God:** A profound and sustained sense of peace.

**IWG:** But what happens if we *don't* manage to achieve your will? We are only humans, and we are very fallible. What if we don't get this right? Will we never arrive at that peace?

**God:** There will be peace, don't worry. It is coming. It is inevitable. I hope it doesn't surprise you if I say I have a plan...

**IWG:** This is so reassuring to me, to my sense of faith, and I want others to have it too. But of course, not everyone can sit and speak directly with you like I am now. A lot of people may never cross the gap into the comfort of faith. Especially those for whom the terms of this life have been less than friendly. And without faith they have to continue to endure this life alone...

**God:** First of all, nobody is ever alone. I'm always around – quite literally. I'm *everything*, so just look around and there I am! Second, by living together on this Earth people are all connected to one another, and many of those are well in contact with me. So even by way of the simplest interactions with each other there is a network in place between us, flowing back and forth.

I described you as drops. Think of rain drops on a window. You've seen that before many times. They all lurch and run here and there across the surface, zig-zagging, touching one another, joining with some, diverging from others, tracking trails on the glass, leaving fresh streaks to be followed. This is the same as the course of your lives, crisscrossing each other's paths. There is constant connection between your lives as you each work your own ways back to the lake. You are traveling companions. So nobody is truly alone. You always have me, and if your faith isn't strong enough to sense that, you have each other to bridge the connection until you can.

**IWG:** Okay, so I want to purposely help move us forward. I want to live a Right Life. I want to advance your will. Which way do I go? How do I start?

**God:** The direction I want you to go is very simple, and that is toward love. (*Looks out at the camera and the audience*) I realize that saying this sounds trite to the cynical among you. In a tough world it's difficult for many people to embrace a concept for living that they consider to be soft, or even impractical. There are many who fear that surrendering to love would amount to weakness, or that love is an illusion of neurochemicals, or it's a disguise for what are really selfish motives. So yes, I realize what I'm up against by asking you for that commitment to love.

And when people are skeptical about what love is, and what love can do, they are often impressed instead by others they see seizing their desires by exerting callous will upon the world. But in truth they are being attracted to just an illusion of success; an empty and fear driven struggle for objects and power. But in reality, they won't succeed through self-centred ways at all. By this path they will instead go along forever unsatisfied, seducing themselves with sliding

expectations, always reaching for bigger and better *things*, but never arriving at contentment. Never finding peace and serenity. Their hearts will never be filled.

And what kind of success is it that leaves one hollow? It is not success at all. Only by sharing and experiencing *love* is there fulfillment. Only in *love* is there true contentment. Only in *love* is there contribution to the greater will of God.

...Hmm. You still look doubtful, Ben...

**IWG:** I'm sorry for remaining skeptical about our prospects, God, but I mean, look at the mess around us! Look at all the terrible conflicts we strike up between ourselves, and the struggles *within* ourselves, trying just to deal with our lives and problems... Much of the time it feels like every man for himself! So at best we tend to be very selective about who we are willing to love. And at worst, we actually come to hate one another...

**God:** I know, I know. And I never tire of watching the process, I must confess. It's all about being fallible humans, as you put it, so it's all about trial and error. And it's actually quite beautiful. Have you ever seen a pachinko machine? You know, those upright pinball games with the little steel balls that bounce around on metal pins until they find their way through a hole? Those things really remind me of you guys. You are just like the little steel balls. When you're born I start you off on a nice, arching trajectory with so much potential, and then tink, tink, tink! Off you go, bouncing and ricocheting around all over the place, trying every sort of wrong and weird way to live you can think of until you finally settle on love. The world is designed for that. It is made so that, by trial and error, you will finally learn – and I will grant you, for some people this happens later than for others – that love is the only way to 'win the game', as it were.

But of course it is not really a game. In fact, love is the arc of transcendence out of meaningless games into something of substance. Love is the reason you're here. It's the point of your business trip. All you will be bringing home in your luggage at the end of the trip is the love you created. And that love you do bring? It sweetens the lake for everyone.

**IWG:** I have to admit, I do like the idea that we are here to love and be loved...

**God:** And you are. To create love, and to take in love.

**IWG:** It's funny, but it almost sounds like a factory process.

**God:** You know what? It actually is. You convert the raw stuff of life into love by living a Right Life. Now, the system doesn't have perfect participation, of course. There will always be those who contribute little, and still others now and then who even cost the process dearly. But these are the exceptions, and with time all gets better regardless.

**IWG:** So do you ever tinker directly with the process to improve it? Or do you hold yourself back, content that it's going to work out fine eventually? I guess what I'm asking is, do you help out a little now and then? Sometimes it almost feels like it...

**God:** Yes, I do a bit of tending now and then, the same way you might help along your garden, but in the end, the garden does the growing on its own. You won't always see my efforts for what they are though, and in fact at times it may even seem like I'm working against you. But I'm not. You have to keep in mind that billions of little things are all going on at once within the system, for the good of absolutely everyone, as best as possible. So if life seems hostile or confusing at times just hang in there, it's going to come around for you too eventually.

**IWG:** So don't give up then, just keep going?

**God:** Of course. And I should point out that the biggest contribution you will make is going to come from the little things you do for others on a regular day. I'm not watching for grand charitable gestures, or monumental sacrifices. These are wonderful too of course, but when you run the numbers, in the end it's the little things that add up the most.

**IWG:** I really, really want to buy into all of this. But I keep coming back to the fact there is so much hatred to overcome. It just seems so overwhelming, and undermines my belief in the power of love, or the chances for love's success...

**God:** Well, you simply don't hear much about the countless, often heroic acts of love taking place all the time. When things go right it doesn't sell as news. But I assure you, love grows and renews itself, while hatred consumes and destroys itself. The balance moves steadily in the direction of love. Love's potential is endless, and it perpetuates itself. Hate also begets hate, but in doing so it destroys itself. And when the destruction is complete, love will find fresh purchase and grow like green sprouts from the ashes of each old, cold fire of hate.

**IWG:** *(Looking off set at someone and gesturing to his watch)* ...Oh okay, I'm sorry but I'm being told we have to break once more to commercial. Thank you God, for this fascinating conversation so far. I'm genuinely moved by all you've had to tell us and I hope you'll still be with us when we come back after the break.

**God:** I'll be here with bells on. Or maybe wind chimes, if that would better suit the mood...

*Cut to commercial.*

## Interview with God Part 3: The Juggler



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*Camera is back to studio live, with a close shot of Ben Dixon and God leaning closely toward one another from in their chairs on stage, laughing and nodding in private conversation over the commotion of enthusiastic applause and music from the studio band. An announcer pitches rapidly: "Ben Dixon's wardrobe is furnished by the Salvation Army, where great deals on good clothes are yours if you can get past who might have died in them. Transportation provided by GM, where 'If you feel like nobody every thinks about you, try missing a car payment'. While in town for recording of the show, God has stayed with The Four Seasons. The Four Seasons: 'Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall, God's four seasons bless you all.' Back to you, Ben!"*

**IWG:** *(Smiling to the cheering audience, gesturing downward politely with his palms for quiet)* Thank you! Thank you very much everyone, and welcome back. Our guest here today of course has been God and we're back again for our last segment of today's show, and what a show it's been – I really do wish we could just keep going on for hours and hours. I have been absolutely fascinated by all you've shared with us already today, God, about why we're here, where we come from, where we go next and so forth... But before we wrap up tonight I want to make sure I acknowledge a huge number of our viewing audience who've called in and e-mailed us, asking questions, and looking for practical tips on how to find contentment in their lives here on Earth. What can you tell us about that, God? How do we go about it? How do we find peace in our day-to-day lives?

**God:** Hmm. Finding peace and serenity. That's a pretty big subject, Ben, and of course the details of a good approach are going to be a little different for each person, according to their physical and psychological makeup, experiences and circumstances, and so on. But there *are* definitely some common basics I can suggest, if that helps.

**IWG:** Please do. We're all ears.

**God:** *(Laughs to himself)* It's more about the hands.

**IWG:** How's that?

**God:** I should just show you what I mean. Let's try doing another visualization together, and you can share it with the audience by describing what you experience, okay? Please close your eyes one more time, Ben, and starting telling us what you see.

**IWG:** Okay. Eyes are closing... closed... I see ...dark... (*Smattering of laughter from audience, then Ben's expression suddenly lights up in surprise.*) Hey! It's a big medieval kind of place. I'm right inside it, standing alone. This looks like a big hall or auditorium or something. Dust in the air ...sunbeams. Really high ceilings, arched and supported by these gorgeous, huge timbers. Hey, there's another person over there, somebody doing something, moving across the stone floor. He's dressed like a court jester, juggling some items, walking around. He's stopped in a shaft of sunlight, which is a good idea actually since it's a little cool in here. It appears by the angle of light that it's early morning. He's looking over now, smiling at me. What's he doing...?

**God:** Well, you tell us. What *is* the man doing?

**IWG:** He's tossing things in the air. Juggling three little blocks of some kind. Hold on, he's just tossed me one. What can I do with one... I can't juggle one...

**God:** What does the block look like?

**IWG:** It's painted wood, like a child's alphabet block. You know, with a letter carved into it and repeated on all sides. The letter is 'F'. He's smiling at me now and then, still making up little balancing and bouncing tricks with the other two blocks. He's goofing around, waiting for something. I think he's waiting for me to toss this block back so he'll have all three again. What do I do, just give it back?

**God:** Not yet. We're going to do something with it first. That F he's tossed to you? It stands for Faith. The juggler is asking you to stop and examine the state of your faith right now.

**IWG:** Oh. Well, I'd have to say my faith is pretty good at the moment, since I have God in a chair right across from me. That helps considerably.

**God:** (*Laughing with audience*) Yes, I can see how that might. But the fact is that you're doing something there that a lot of people do, confusing faith with the clarity of their image of God. Those are entirely different things, you know. You can actually have no idea of what I am, or what I might look like, but possess oceans of faith all the same. Faith just requires you to accept that, while you do have your role in the events of your life, there are also influences beyond your control. Faith needs you to accept that there are *supposed* to be things beyond your control. That the wits and resources you require will be there for you when the time is right.

**IWG:** Okay I can manage that. Sometimes, actually... And you know that's just *it*, God: The state of my faith, in those terms you've just described, well, it changes daily. Moment to moment, actually...

**God:** Right, and that's normal. Faith is not something you get given to you one day that you just pocket and hang onto. *Faith needs daily care and attention.* When the juggler tossed you that block, he was inviting you to stop and listen to yourself. To feel around for any twinges of fear and frustration, because these are the hallmarks of flagging faith. Of diminishing acceptance. Think of those feelings as warning sensors, telling you to stop and examine them, trace them back to their source, and do what you can to build your faith back up again.

**IWG:** Fear and frustration are the problem?

**God:** Fear and frustration are signals that you're making up your mind about how things should go. And this means you're going to find yourself continually upset about the inevitable way events and people's actions do not unfold accordingly. That is a *lack of faith* that your God knows what he's doing, that I care about you, and maybe even reveals a speck of doubt about whether I'm actually here at all. But I *am* here, and my presence is revealed to you in subtle ways over and over again over time.

Let's stop a minute and talk about this exercise so far. You can open your eyes again now, for the moment.

**IWG:** ...Goodbye, juggler man...! (*Rubbing eyes against the bright studio lights*) Wow, that looked so real, even though I was aware all the while it was a, uh... What was that? An illusion? Or a dream...?

**God:** They used to call them visions long ago, and people had them all the time. They were open to having them. It's tough to compete with media nowadays, filling everyone's free consciousness. In fact you watch: People are going to find out soon that they need to meditate like they need to eat and sleep... Anyway, the point of the exercise so far with the juggler and that letter 'F' is to make you take a moment to stop, and evaluate the state of your faith. You must always monitor it, respect its vital importance to you, and do what is required to develop faith and keep it healthy.

Faith is an important reservoir in your life. Trying to get faith when you've already run out is a lousy time to go looking. It's like deciding to find gas for your car once the tank has run dry on a side road somewhere...

**IWG:** You know I have to confess I've actually had considerable trouble with faith all my life. I have this tendency to conjure up the worst possible situations, so long as I have even the smallest stub of doubt to begin with at all. And if I don't have good reason to worry, it's like I will make something up to fill the void. Whatever way I manage it, the anxiety I'm able to conjure up can be overwhelming. And relentless...

**God:** That's all too common, unfortunately, although you wouldn't know it by the way everyone goes around acting like they have it all together. Even when inside almost everyone really doesn't. Anyway, that anxiety you describe tells you that your spiritual self has dropped the 'F', and you need to stop and pick it up again. Collect your faith and get it back in the air again.



**IWG:** But how? It seems impossible sometimes to just resign myself to believing that things will work out. Especially when sometimes they *don't* work out! Bad things happen to people all the time. And good people, at that...

**God:** You are not keeping in mind that *good* things happen all the time too. And there are a whole lot more of those occasions, by the way. Like I said earlier, you simply don't hear about them much. And on that point, do yourself a favour and stop worrying about what you've *heard* of happening to other people. First of all, you don't know the whole story, about what's gone before leading up the situation, or what necessary growth will come out of the experience for those involved in the end. In life yes, bad things do happen, but something good always comes out of it too.

Let me ask you something: When was the last time things truly *didn't* work out for *you* in the end? And I don't mean, when things didn't work out the way you *expected*.

**IWG:** Well, that's just it. I can actually look back and see that most things – well, pretty much *everything* of any real concern actually, has ended up resolving itself just fine all my life. But I still can't seem to help myself. Regardless of what's come before, it seems like every time my back is to the wall, doubt creeps in right on cue and takes charge once again. I wind up convincing myself that I've just been somehow always lucky to that point, so lucky, in fact, that my luck has *got* to be running out...

And why is that? Why is my life's actual track record not fuel for my faith, instead of grist for superstition about a long run of dumb luck about to dry up? I get scared and suddenly I decide I have to take matters into my own hands, and I run around anxiously trying to make things happen sometimes. Then I act on bad decisions that only make things worse, or I'll waste mountains of energy that I really can't afford to lose, worrying about what often turns out to be nothing at all.

Why can't I just drop my guard and relax? Why can't I just release it all and have faith in you, all the time?

**God:** Faith is a blessing, but it is one you get for yourself, not one that I hand to you. In fact, that's the clincher right there: Only you can bestow faith upon yourself.

You know that expression, 'leap of faith'? It's a very apt one, since to experience faith you must literally move yourself over to it; sometimes at considerable effort. Faith doesn't come looking for you. You must establish within yourself a firm conviction that *you are going to live in faith*. You must find courage of conviction, because while the road of faith is straight and true, it is also narrow and the sides are steep.

Let me ask you, Ben, have you been through a situation which you first thought catastrophic, but which in the end turned out to be a blessing?

**IWG:** Sure I have. Like there are times I've thought I wanted something so badly, and when I didn't get it I was bitterly disappointed. But in the end I'd wind up with something even better.

Something that could never have materialized had things gone the way I'd wanted. Sometimes those experiences actually led me to at first cast doubt on you, I'm ashamed to admit. And then it all worked out just fine.

Yet even now, with the knowledge of such hindsight, I'm *still* on many occasions consumed by fear that everything is going to turn out for the worst.

**God:** I understand the fear you go through – I gave you that instinct, to protect yourself, and to motivate you to do what you can to take care of yourself. Fear has its place. But so does faith.

Fear tells you to swim and when it's time to swim. Faith tells you to float when there's nowhere to swim to, and it's best to just let the river flow for a while. You need to know when to float.

**IWG:** Hmmm. I suspect there may be a bit of self-loathing in there, if I look deeply, that blocks me off from faith when I reach for it. My courage to be able to relax in faith seems related to how worthy I feel of the blessings that faith anticipates, you know?

**God:** And that points back to the importance of living a Right Life, by which you can eventually come to accept your entitlement to good things in this life. In a Right Life you are moving *with* the river. But if you instead live in selfishness and arrogance, then you'll need to change that before you can be buoyed by faith. You will be fighting the river – and the river always wins.

You can decide not to try, and just wring your hands in fear if you must, but I'd much prefer to see you living in the serenity faith can bring. You have to understand, your own peace of mind works better for *me* too, since a peaceful mind is more fertile ground for generating the love that I put you here to create and share in the first place. Your *decision to make the leap* to have Faith is a gift to yourself, and a realization of my own will for you as well. You're not as much use to anyone if you're stuck living a life mired in self-centred fear.

**IWG:** Okay... I think it really does help knowing that you *want* me to believe in an order to all things as much as *I* want to believe, for my own sake. (*Hesitates*) ...And I'm sorry, but I'm looking at the time we have left in the show and I have to ask if we can please go back and finish with that juggler, and the other blocks he had in his hands...

**God:** Oh! You're so right. I'm sorry, I can go on about faith for forever, literally. Good idea, let's get back to the Juggler. Close your eyes again, Ben, and let's go back in your mind again... +

**IWG:** (*Closes eyes once more and leans back in his chair*) Okay eyes closing ...and... whoa, we are right back there. This is *so* cool. Can I do this anytime I want to?

**God:** Of course. I'd be delighted if you started every morning with an exercise like this. It's a great way to get the day started *with* me.

**IWG:** And hey, there's our friend the juggler again, still going at it... Okay, here... I just tossed the block with the F back to him, and he's ...caught it and worked it smoothly back into his juggling. He's pretty good at that. And just gave me a smile. He seems pleased with how the F

has come back to him and ...whoops! Now he's just tossed another block to me... I caught it and I'm looking at it and this one has the letter 'G' on it. Okay what's the G stand for?

**God:** Ah. 'G' is for gratitude. In a Right Life you must always bear in mind the many, many good things you've been blessed with in your life. If you are not conscious of your reasons for gratitude, you'll find yourself focused instead on what you *don't* have. You will become covetous of other people's things, and resentful of those who have what you have not. The suffering will be endless. Once again, it comes down to nurturing your *ability* to love, both yourself and others. Suffering and ill will are stony ground in which to sow love. I want you to be grateful for what you have, and to be content.

**IWG:** Okay, so the G is about the importance of gratitude. Now what do I do to get the G back in the air?

**God:** Hold on, hold on. No need to rush. Just take a little time first to experience genuine gratitude for what you've got. It actually feels good, you know, and if you can be honest with yourself you won't need to look very far. Just consider for a moment the vital basics you take for granted every busy day. You have clean water. Food. A warm and safe place to sleep. You've got clothes on your back. People to love, and who love you back. You have a body to transport you, and senses through which to experience an amazing and wonderful world. Without so much as a penny in your pocket, you are already immensely blessed.

By focusing on even just your most basic blessings, and by keeping faith that you'll always have access to what you need, you will always find reasons to be grateful. When you find yourself envious, or hard done by, then you've lost your sense of gratitude. Your juggler has dropped the 'G', and it is time again for some reflection on your many blessings.

**IWG:** Okay, that's a G for gratitude, and there's one more letter left. The G goes back in... and now the juggler has returned one last throw, this time with an H. Hey – F, G, H... They sit together beside each other in the alphabet. Is that a coincidence?

**God:** Yeah, actually it is. It just happens to work out that way in English, but if it helps you remember the sequence of this exercise then hey, run with it.

**IWG:** Okay that works for me. And again I'm sorry, but since we're running out of time I have to press straight ahead and ask, what does the H stand for?

**GOD:** Humility. The H is about humility. Without humility, you can't accept that there is a power greater than yourself, and so how can you ever achieve faith? You doom yourself to a life of frustrated delusion and self-will. And without humility you can't appreciate the immensity of what blessings you have, so you become mired in a begrudging, malcontent life without gratitude.

**IWG:** So it seems then that all three of these things are connected...

**God:** That's correct. You can see that Faith, Gratitude and Humility all lean upon one another. They hold each other up, and combined they can support faith. Without any one of them, the others fall down, and personal contentment and serenity won't be achieved.

But let's get back to talking about humility specifically, because it is kind of a special one. Humility can be trickiest of the three building blocks of a Right Life, because people often don't realize that humility is like a sword with two sharp edges – one pointing away from yourself, and another edge pointing right back.

One side of humility – or more accurately, one side of a *lack* of humility – cuts outward against others. The outward edge of humility is the more obvious to most people: You find yourself offended by some transgression, real or imagined, intentional or incidental, and you say to yourself, "How *dare* that person do that to *me*." In this case, the lack of humility places you against the world with the sword sharpened in resentment, as though the words or actions of whomever offended you really mattered at all against your personal worth. In reality, of course, whatever people want to say or think about you makes no real difference. The only thing that matters is your own reaction. So when you succumb to resentment, not only do you shatter your own sense of peace, you also diminish your capacity for love, which as we've discussed is a no-no.

**IWG:** Okay I get that. When I let others offend me, it's a lack of humility that directs my resentment outward against them. So what's this inward edge you mention?

**God:** The edge pointed toward yourself does its damage on those occasions when you treat *yourself* harshly –without love for yourself – saying or thinking, "I have *failed*. How could I be so *stupid*. I should have *known* better," and self-harming thoughts like that. You might get to that point where you start to decide in broader terms, "I'm just not good enough," and you give up, for fear of not excelling in a way that only *you* think you must. This lack of humility cuts inward, punishing yourself unjustly for failing to live up to a self-imposed standard you would never apply to others.

So when you find yourself in a state of resentment – cutting outward *or* inward – you know you must stop and take a good look at that 'H' lying there on the ground. You must release your investment in what others may say or think about you, and ease up the standards you place on yourself while you're at it. I mean think about it: *Who* exactly do you have to *prove* anything to? As for myself, I already *know* you aren't perfect – I *made* you that way, and I intended to. I'm happy with you just as you are, and with what you are trying to become. So you should learn to like yourself too.

And besides, I will remind you once again: You are only here *temporarily*. Don't delude yourself that the world rests on your shoulders. It doesn't. You are just a simple, beautiful drop from the same lake as everyone else – from *me* – and you are coming back into me eventually. Don't take yourself so seriously on this little business trip. (*Smiling warmly*) You're just a dribbly drop of love, for crying out loud. I'm not asking you to be anything more than that. So show a little humility, would you?

**IWG:** (*Laughing*) I wish I'd spoken to you this morning before driving in! I got cut off in traffic and I'm *still* holding a grudge against the clown who changed lanes into me.

**God:** You *could* have spoken to me this morning if you'd wanted to... I'll give you a hint: I like to juggle...

**IWG:** Ah, I see. Well I know what I'll be doing tomorrow morning then, to start my day... Okay we're just about at the end of our time together, so I'll fire out one last quick question from our audience... This one: 'Is there a Hell?'

**God:** If you mean an actual place called 'Hell', that some people are sent to after death, then no. The only place beyond this life is back in the lake with me, for everybody.

**IWG:** But what about the murderers, and the molesters and the rapists, and the tyrants who terrorize and hurt and oppress other people? What about those who hurt the lives of others, and make them suffer?

**God:** Their actions do hurt me, and sadden me, and certainly run counter to my will, but you see I cannot *make* them – or anyone else for that matter – love other people. Nobody can be *made* to love. This is exactly why I created you, and gave you free will to act on your own volition: If I *controlled* you, I could not make you generate love. *Love only grows where the choice exists to do so.* Love cannot be commanded or contrived, so I had to set you free in this life. All I can do is guide you the best I can by way of circumstances, and arrange that opportunities and resources be available for you when you reach for them.

And you know what? It's working. The fulfillment of my will in creating love among you is progressing. But it's a necessarily independent process, and of course like any process – like any chemical reaction, or any energy source, and so on – it has its imperfections. And this is not at all surprising because, like I've just said, I made you human and imperfect, and I did that intentionally. But an imperfect process can yield a perfect result if you let it go and give it time.

And those people who you might think deserve to be removed from the process, banished to a place called 'Hell', well they are part of the process too. While there *are* bad things that happen – imperfect parts of my process – which can be abhorrent to you and myself alike, we must not dwell on the harm caused, but rather our focus should instead be on that which comes after. You must look instead at the outpouring of love that comes forward to help and protect victims. You must appreciate what a rare and perfect kind of love it is that so frequently manifests in the grace of forgiveness.

People thrust into difficult and hurtful situations often find reserves of compassion and kindness they would never have otherwise known were within them. So you see? What appears on the surface to be a very imperfect process is in fact working quite efficiently toward perfection.

Remember the basics, Ben: I *am* love, you are *of* me, and your own precious gifts of healing and helping and forgiveness toward others moves my will forward. Whatever happens to you, fortunate or otherwise, just by working through it you fulfill the intent of your birth, and your life is one of purpose and meaning.

**IWG:** And those murderers and so on really do all go right back to you in the end, the same as everyone else?

**God:** Of course. *All* returns to me, all resumes being in me. You remember when we talked about the glasses filling and emptying and so on? The point was that each life is a one-time shot – so there's no point in punishing those who've squandered the opportunity once it's all over. There is no second chance to rehabilitate toward through punishment.

Think about it: Life is a tough proposition, no doubt about it. But it's also a staggeringly unique opportunity – a miracle, really – to have your chance to move Creation forward for me. To have your own personal contribution to the advancement of my will etched forever in the bedrock of its achievement.

With a one-time gift of such potential at hand, wouldn't you describe it as a kind of Hell in and of itself to instead wander the world selfish and empty, blind to the point of love, unaware that the relief of meaning is right there, just beyond your grasp? If there is any kind of Hell, it's in how you might decide to live your life. It is not a place you go; it's a choice you make.

**IWG:** That is remarkable. But our time is now definitely up, the producer is waving frantically at me, so I'd like to thank our audience as always and our viewers for being here with us today, our sponsors and the cast and crew and of course, God, thank you so very much for being our guest. I've truly enjoyed the opportunity to speak with you, and you've given us so much to think about. I hope we can get together again sometime...

**God:** (*Smiling*) Oh we will. We will be most definitely be back together one day...

**IWG:** Oh yes, that's right too, isn't it? (*Laughing*) Well then until that time, goodnight everybody!

**God:** (*Smiling, arms open to the audience*) And God bless you!

*Wild audience applause, pull back to wide camera, stage lights dim to silhouettes, credits roll.*

*End of episode.*